



Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

Book Title: *Pictures of Hollis Woods*

Author: Patricia Reilly Giff

Interest Level: 4th-6th grade

Lexile: 650L

Length: 166 pages

Guide developed by: Patti Wood

Summary

Artistic 12-year-old Hollis Woods, abandoned as a baby, has a habit of running away from foster homes. To the social agency, she is a “mountain of trouble” because she skips school and runs away, even from the Regans, a family willing to give her a real home. She is placed with Josie, a former art teacher, who wants and needs her, so Hollis thinks she'll stay for a while. Josie becomes more and more forgetful, and Hollis is afraid someone will find out and take her away. Hollis plans a winter escape for the two of them. She takes Josie and escapes to Branches, the summer home of the Regan's. Even though Hollis is happy with Josie, she longs for her life with the Regans, and records every special moment with them in a gallery of pictures.

Conceptual Connections

Conceptual Lens: belonging

Other Key Concepts: change; family

Essential Understandings:

- Individuals have a need to belong.
- All families experience change.

Essential Questions:

- What is the difference between being needed and being wanted? How do both contribute to a sense of belonging?
- How does change impact families?

Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

Introductory Activity/Hook

All individuals need to feel they are needed and wanted. Families are where we first get our sense of belonging. By the time we get into elementary and middle school, we want to feel needed and wanted by our friends....we want to belong. Write a short entry in your journal about a time you felt you did not belong, a time you felt left out.

Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions

Identification:

- What is Hollis' talent? How does she use her talent in the story?
- What happens when she goes to live with the Regans?
- How does her life change when she goes to live with Josie?
- What event at the end of the book helps Hollis understand the meaning of family?

Catharsis:

- How did Hollis feel as a foster child?
- How did Hollis' feelings about herself change when she first went to live with the Regans?
- How did Hollis feel about Josie? How did Josie feel about Hollis?
- How did Hollis' feelings about herself change by the end of the book?

Insight:

- What makes you feel needed and wanted by your family? Your friends?
- How does it feel when you don't feel you belong?
- What can you do to help others feel they belong?

Universalization/Follow up Activity

With a partner, write a short two-person scenario in which one person feels he/she doesn't belong. Write the dialogue between the two people with one person offering encouragement and support for the person who feels left out or unwanted. Perform the dialogue for the class.

Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

Before Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete independently

A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

Knowledge Questions

- Who were the main characters?
- How did Hollis get her name?
- What was Hollis' favorite color?
- What did Hollis like about living with the Regan family?
- What did Hollis like about living with Josie?

Comprehension Questions

- Why are the chapters of Hollis' memories titled First Picture, Second Picture, etc. instead of Chapter One, etc?
- Why is Hollis so determined to stay with Josie?
- Why did she believe she didn't deserve to be in a family?
- Why does Hollis think she is the reason Steven and the Old Man argue?
- Why does Hollis think the accident is her fault?

B. Vocabulary Study: Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

Vocabulary Words

- jetty (p. 24)
- marquee (p. 34)
- perspective (p. 44)
- composition (p. 44)
- stanchions (p. 53)
- pewter (p. 118)
- deceptive (p. 121)
- incorrigible (p. 124)

Group Discussion: Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

Higher-Level Questions (using Bloom's categories)

1. Application:

- Hollis makes a personal sacrifice to stay with Josie. In the past Hollis has skipped school. Now that she's living with Josie, Hollis goes to school so the "mustard woman" (aka Social

Services woman) won't take her away. If you were in Hollis's place, do you think you would have done the same thing? Does what Hollis did make sense?

- How would Hollis define "home?"
- What would be the most difficult thing for you to accept if you were a foster child?
- There is a saying "a picture is worth a thousand words." What do you think this means? Do you think this is true?

2. Analysis:

- Josie's cousin Beatrice says "And sometimes what you see is so deep in your head you're not even sure of what you're seeing. But when it's down there on paper, and you look at it, really look, you'll see the way things are" (p. 45). What do Hollis' pictures say about the truth?
- Why was Hollis a "mountain of trouble?"
- What type of foster mother was Izzy? Josie?

3. Evaluation:

- What does this story tell you about loyalty?
- What impressed you most about Hollis? Steven? Josie? The Old Man? Izzy? Beatrice?
- What does this story tell us about foster care and what children like Hollis need?

4. Synthesis:

- What do you think will be the next picture in Hollis' memory?
- How would the story have been different if Hollis had not left the Regans?
- What type of music would you use as the background for Hollis' pictures?

After Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

A. Connections to the Curriculum: Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts**—Review the basic theme of *The Wizard of Oz*. Students will discuss how Hollis Woods' journey might be compared to Dorothy Gale's journey. They will write a short paper that Hollis might write entitled "Dreams That You Dare to Dream Really Do Come True."
- **Social Studies**—Hollis has to write a composition on Henry Hudson for school. Since Hollis speaks the language of art so well, perhaps her assignment should be to draw her composition. Students will research Henry Hudson, and draw one picture that sums up his role in American History. Encourage students to apply an appropriate caption.
- **Science/Health**—Josie is forgetful and is possibly suffering from Alzheimer's disease or some type of dementia. Students will research symptoms, treatment, and life expectancy of someone who suffers from Alzheimer's or dementia, including statistics regarding the number of people in the United States who are victim to these diseases, medical breakthroughs, and family/caretaker issues.
- Hollis Woods says that she will draw animal prints for Steven. Students will research the kind of animals that might live in the mountains where Branches, the Regans' summer home, is located in New York. They will find footprints for each of these animals draw and label them. Why would Hollis think this a perfect gift for Steven?
- **Art**—At one point in the novel, Hollis Woods tries to draw jubilant. She uses yellows, oranges, and pinks. Students will list and discuss the many different emotions expressed in the book. They will then select appropriate colors for each emotion. Students will illustrate a wordless picture book called *My Family* that Hollis might make for Christina, her new little sister.

- **Careers**—Beatrice had been an art teacher for 40 years, but had never seen anyone who could do what Hollis could do. Students will research in books or sites on the Internet to find out the many different career options in art for Hollis.
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama**—Students read *Journey* by Patricia MacLachlan. The group will discuss how Journey’s life compares with Hollis Woods’ life. How are the ways each uses art—Journey with photography and Hollis with painting—important to the growth of their character? Students will role play a conversation between Hollis Woods and Journey where they discuss the meaning of art and photography in their life.

B. Creative Reading: Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher)

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character’s perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story: Illustrate each of Hollis’ picture as described in the book.